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Question1: The words "safety net" has been used in the current farm program. The safety net has not been that. A real safety net needs to be addressed -- not only for beginning farmers, but for existing farmers. Factors involved in the "saftey net concept" would include long term weather forecasts, input cost (diesel fuel, insurance, seed,) for each crop and an adequate amount of compensation for the risk taking by the individual farmer -- that is family farmer. Farms with many acres have benefited from the current program and it appears that the program was not intended for the farmer with less than 1000 acres. The program was added to for livestock. An example for this area: hail, drought, disease has decreased the yield for at least 7 years for many farmers-- the current program was to ease into less government assistance but the prices to the farmers were to rise. The commodity prices rose but only a bit and remained. The prices of expenses rose and rose and continue to rise -- ex. fuel costs have increased over \$1.00 a gallon this year -- was there a like manner in the commodity prices-- no!-- instead the corn farm is getting LDP.

Question2: Competitiveness in global markets is a difficult question. My first thoughts are -- we need to be sure we have adequate supplies for our own nation and have excess crops to sell. I realize determining the excess crop is difficult. The crop quantity can be diminished in a short time by weather (be it hail, or hurricane). Our nation does need other products produced in other nations, but where does the priority of people of the USA fit into the picture. Several years ago I read a paper listing the states with the poorest counties in the nation. Nebraska had three of those counties. Are the people of the USA (in some areas) in need of financial assistance through farm programs.

Question3: Fairness is always a debatable question. What is fair to one area of the country maybe adding to the wealth of another area and downsizing in another area.

I don't know if using a 20 year average is a good method. Example if several years of crop diasters and one receives crop insurance. The APH is decreased-- the coverage then decreases. Is this fair to those suffering losses caused by weather. Yet the increased yield of the farmers with great yields increase the APH for crop insurnce and the coverage amount is greater. In the first instance the coverage decreases. Both farmers probably tilled the ground and did many of the same practices, yet the because of destruction of the crop by weather happening, the farmer suffers a loss in the coverage he can have over the coming years for the APH is decreased. One program added in the last 10 years has been the option of taking the county yield instead of a 0 but that has not been the case in all years.

Fairness -- We need all types of risk takers in the field of finance, but do we need the risk takers seeking a loss to offset other income and lessen their IRS bill.

Yes, I may agree some farmers do not work as hard, but other work hard and do not reap a reward of stability in the financial realm.

What could be effective? This is a tough question.

Fairness and justice for all is a statement that has been repeated many times. As a brainstorm-- the country could be divided into areas and those areas into sub areas. The sub areas could be assessed as to the types of farms, acreages, the yields, the cost of production, sale price of the commodity, distance to acquired many of the inputs and some things I may not have thought of. From this data base, a trend could be seen in the sub areas as to the largest land owner to the smallest. Possibly a survey from the farmers could be used to develop the data base. I think of a man I know that farms 7000 acres-- he has a full time job and his wife works full time-- He can't make it on 7000 acres. If he can't make it on 7000 acres and gets a full time job probably with benefits (health insurance -- this is a costly family item and retirement). I know of another farmer who farms about 5000 acres. This past year he had 1500 acres of hard red winter wheat-- of that 600 acres did not get harvested-- because of disease, hail (basically weather concerns).

I tries to make it on his own without seeking work away from the farm for himself or his wife. Who is the farmer? Which one is surviving with no struggle?

Assistance distribution in the way of diaster programs has assisted, but many times the yields are borderline assistance on the crop insurance policy you choose.

These diaster programs can be delayed for up to three years after the diaster -- When the hurricanes hit this year, the people had some type of assistance within a matter of days -- via a credit card for \$2000.00. I do not like to receive assistance like this but when the normal yield for hard red winter wheat is about 35 bushel an acre and your yield is 20 bushel. The opportunity to have adequate funds to pay the bills are decreased considerable. If the sale price of wheat is \$3.00 time 15 bu equals \$45.00 lost per acre to pay other bills.

Question4: Conservation and environmental concerns are always lurking at the doorstep. Water conservation not only is a concern for farming communities but for the whole nation. Personally, I made a choice a year this past summer. Do I want a green yard, or do I want to bathe, do dishes as I needed? I chose to bathe and do the dishes over the grass. Sometimes the choices are easy and other times not so easy.

Out government entities need to be the leaders in this field too.

I cut back on my outside water, and had a dirt car, but I see the City watering grass "daily" as I walked to work. -- You see I conserved on gas from Jan 1 on. I don't live that far from work. I limited my self to driving 2 days a week and walk otherwise. Others I have spoken with, come to town schedule 2 times a week unless parts are needed. If parts are needed, then the scheduled trip is deleted.

Environmental concerns are being met by some programs administered by USDA. If land needs to sell and is under the USDA conservation reserve program -- it brings a higher price -- the purchasers know the dollar value to be recived on that land is set for the remaining years-- they know what the income will be and no risk.

Question5: Many rural areas do need assistance with internet access as an example. But what happened to the risk taking business people (ex. phone companies). My perpective is this is not a market that will reap

great financial rewards and investor (stock purchasers) look to the bottom line (over all profit). Many investors do not look at the activities behind the profits and is this helping other segments of society to broaden the market-- but rather at the final dollar amount rather than assisting others in the nation to have equal advantages of internet as the same cost as the city folk.

When the business community does entry the less profitable markets, the government then develops programs to allow the progress. the programs developed many time partner with a business (phone company) to achieve the goal of making a new market (or access to the people available)

Once again, If the partnerships need to happen, then they need to happen. The assistance can be thru grants, or loan. Small business needs to have this advantage too -- not just larger companies. The programs need to be advertised and with fairness

Question6: How far should the expansion be extended in ag?

This question leads to brainstorming ideas which it appears to have been done in the question. Like a child learning to walk, they don't gain the momentum to run as soon as they stand. They try and try and try till they accomplish the task of walking.

so it is with programs developed. Only add one brain storming idea at once. -- example a new product many times has test areas-- why not develop with test areas-- but this can have far out reaching effects around the country-- with the communications we have now a days.

One problem I see -- not all the testing will be able to be done in all areas of the US. Ex. A program for apple growers in Washington state will not be able to be used in the midwest and likewise a wheat testing program may not fit in cotton country